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SUBJECT: CODEL CARNAHAN MEETING WITH CHINESE IPU DELEGATION

SUMMARY

1. (SBU) On April 7, CODEL Carnahan met the Chinese delegation from the National People's Congress (NPC) on the margins of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly, held in Addis Ababa. The two delegations emphasized the importance of the bilateral relationship and discussed opportunities for cooperation on climate change and on conflict in Sudan. End Summary.

2. (SBU) On April 7, Representatives Russ Carnahan, Mazie Hirono, Jim McDermott and Diane Watson met with Zha Peixin, Vice Chairman of the NPC Foreign Affairs Committee and Wang Chaoqun, newly promoted Chair of the NPC's Environment and Natural Resources Committee, on the margins of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly, held at the United Nations Convention Center in Addis Ababa. Staff from both delegations were also present. Zha, who worked in the PRC liaison office in Washington, DC in the 1970s, speaks English fluently but used a PRC interpreter in deference to his delegation.

"Most Important Bilateral Relationship"

3. (SBU) Representative Carnahan noted that early and high level meetings between the United States and China showed the importance of the bilateral relationship. He noted that he had met with the Chairman of the NPC Foreign Affairs Committee in 2008 and that a Chinese trade delegation had visited Missouri to discuss a mutually beneficial air hub. Zha offered that the change in U.S. administrations has ushered in a "new chapter of China-U.S. relations" and added that President Hu Jintao had a "productive" meeting with President Obama on the margins of the G-20 summit. "Both sides want to work for a positive, cooperative and comprehensive relationship," Zha said, highlighting such mechanisms for bilateral cooperation as the Strategic Dialogue and the Strategic Economic Dialogue. Zha added that "Both sides [at the G-20] also reiterated that this is the most important bilateral relationship in the world, with more and more common interests. We have great potential for cooperation in tackling the global financial crisis, energy security and climate change, and we are making great strides in improving relations for the benefit of both our people." Reiterating that the U.S.-China relationship is "the most important bilateral relationship in the twenty-first century, Zha said China "stands ready to push it to a new level."

4. (SBU) Zha welcomed the U.S. observer delegation back to the IPU after a ten year absence. Zha said that the U.S. Congress and the NPC have enjoyed positive relations recently and that there are a number of exchange mechanisms between the two legislatures. "Through regular contacts we can improve pragmatic cooperation and make fresh contributions to our bilateral relations," Zha said, adding that the NPC is also prepared to have regular contacts on the sidelines of major international conferences and other international parliamentary exchanges.

15. (SBU) Representative Watson highlighted China's role in East Asian regional security and in global development, and raised a question about small arms trade in East Africa. Representative Watson added that solutions to problems in developing countries must be diplomatic, not military. In response, Zha agreed that developing countries need diplomatic solutions to their problems and said China's arms exports are small in comparison with those of the United States and that China has been "highly responsible" in this area, consistent, Zha added, with China's policy not to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. Turning to Darfur, Zha said that China follows the humanitarian situation closely "in that part of the world," and that the best way forward is continued tripartite consultations between the United Nations, the African Union (AU) and Sudanese authorities, and to promote domestic reconciliation. Noting China has sent peacekeepers to Darfur, Zha said China is willing to see the hybrid peacekeeping force further strengthened. Some progress has been made on Darfur, and the AU and "Arab countries" can help. China remains ready to strengthen cooperation with the U.S. in this area, Zha said.

16. (SBU) Representative Hirono cited President Obama's pledge to reduce greenhouse gases and asked about China's progress in carbon capture technology. In response, Wang noted that he was newly-appointed, but said that China believes there has been a policy shift in the U.S. on climate change. China's stance, Wang said, is to work within existing United Nations frameworks and the Kyoto Protocol, address climate change through a "common but differentiated principle," discuss carbon production in "per capita"

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terms, and take a historical perspective on carbon production. "Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said China cannot commit itself to specific emissions targets," Wang said, "because developing countries took decades to develop. However, China stands ready to work with others on new approaches." Wang said China relies primarily on reforestation for carbon capture and has produced the largest "artificial greenery" in the world. In the 1990s, China's forest cover had dropped to twelve percent, but has subsequently risen to eighteen percent and the government plans to boost that total by an additional two percent as part of its eleventh five-year plan. China is also diversifying its electric supply thanks to projects such as the Three Gorges Dam, Wang said. Wang added that, although China is still "coal dependent," the country is interested in clean-coal technology.

17. (SBU) Zha added that China is top in aggregate pollution but produces one third less pollution per capita than more developed nations. "China is still a developing country," Zha said, "but takes seriously conservation measures." China plans to reduce per capita pollution by twenty percent over the next five years and ten percent overall, Zha noted.

18. (SBU) CODEL Carnahan has cleared this cable.

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